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Artists' Comments

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CELTIC

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by Patrick Wynne

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What I'm going to do is black out all your unflattering inferences and speculations about my taste in poetry and my attitude toward Tolkien and his works, inferences and speculations which were, for the most part, w-a-a-a-y off the mark (and irrelevant as well, to the issue). Then I'm settling down to some serious study of your fascinating assessment of the metrical intricacies of Tolkien's verse. If only an article of such expertise had been available when I first started trying to get beyond the "I like this poem; I like this one better" stage of critical assessment! (If there are such articles available, I could not unearth one. Rats!) Heck, I still think "Tinfang Warble" is a dreadful little poem, especially in comparison with others that Tolkien wrote, but I now understand better what Tolkien was doing metrically in this verse, and I thank you for the explication. I learned long ago that learning is a better companion than ego, and you were (or seemed to me to be) dead-on in several places where you pointed out weaknesses and inconsistencies in my presentation. And if I hadn't submitted the article, you wouldn't have been provoked into responding, and I might have never had a chance to correct some misconceptions or pursue some of the avenues you mention.

As soon as I stop seeing stars (you punch mighty hard), I'll get right to it.

ARTISTS' COMMENTS

Front Cover: "Dorothy L. Sayers"
by Nancy-Lou Patterson

In my cover drawing in honor of the Centenary of Dorothy L. Sayers (1893-1957), I have based her portrait upon the sketch by John Gilroy RA made in 1930. It shows her in a triumphant mood, when, having already published her twelve famous and still-popular detective novels, she was invited to write *The Zeal of Thy House*, a play performed in Canterbury Cathedral. That cathedral is on her right (the viewer's left), reminding us that she was a lifelong Anglican, while an angel from the ceiling of Fenchurch St. Paul, the setting of her detectival masterpiece, the *Nine Tailors*, along with her matchless detective, Lord Peter Wimsey, depicted as acted by Edward Petherbridge, are on her left (the viewer's right). The portraitist sketched her as she approached the pivot of her career, which began in 1916 with the publication of *Op. I.*, her first book of poetry, and ended when she died in the midst of translating the third and final part of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. As poet, novelist, essayist, playwright, and scholar, she shared with her fellow Christian writers C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and T.S. Eliot, a profound sense of the spiritual dimensions of reality.

Back Cover: "Searching Upward" by Sarah Beach,
from Dorothy L. Sayers' *The Nine Tailors*

At the end of *The Nine Tailors*, when the missing emeralds have been found and when the mystery body has been identified, there remained a question as to how the man had died. A flood is washing over the fens of the area, and Wimsey climbs the church's bell tower to look out over the region. As he climbs through the bell chamber, the bells are rung in alarm, and Lord Peter is given a demonstration of what it was that killed the mystery man — nine hours of being tied up in the bell chamber during a marathon peal.

When I came to do this picture, I decided to go for a more stylized appearance. Lord Peter's search at this point is objectively simple, to see the extent of the flood. But subjectively he's still in the dark, he still seeks an answer to the mystery of the dead man — an existential question, if you will. So he searches upward through the bells, and finds his answer.

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